

WIGAN COUNCIL

BROWNFIELD LAND TARGETED FOR THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES IN WIGAN BOROUGH

Thousands of new homes in Wigan Borough will be built on previously developed land, new figures reveal. Wigan Council has published its brownfield land register which identifies 130 disused sites suitable for new housing development.

The borough has a strong track record in delivering brownfield sites for housing, with almost 1,000 homes built on previously developed sites over the last two years - two-thirds of the total completed. The 130 identified sites have the potential to accommodate 9,600 homes in the future.

Wigan Council has a 10 year ambition to deliver enough quality housing to match demand and provide jobs and economic growth for the benefit of residents. As set out in its Economic Prospectus, the council aims to create 10,000 jobs, enable the building of 10,000 new homes and create 12,000 apprentices over the next decade.

Karl Battersby, Wigan Council's director for economy and environment, said: "The council is committed to maximising housing delivery on previously developed sites in the borough. "Brownfield land will make a significant contribution to addressing housing needs over the next 20 years. "A key objective for the council is to reduce the amount of green belt release needed to meet housing needs. The sites in the brownfield register will contribute to this need."

Around 70 sites within the brownfield register already have planning permission, totalling around 5,400 homes, with the remainder deemed to be available, suitable and deliverable in the short to medium term. Due to the borough's mining and industrial past, a proportion of the brownfield sites have development constraints which need to be overcome, including contamination and mine shafts. The council is committed to unlocking these sites and to proactively work with landowners and developers to bring these sites forward.

Wigan borough's brownfield figures are:

- 50.7% of the borough's housing land supply (2017-35) is on brownfield sites (10,675 of 21,036 homes)
- 65.8% of net housing completions were on brownfield land between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2017 (958 of 1,456 homes)

Any landowners with brownfield land available for development should contact the council. The borough's brownfield register can be viewed at: www.wigan.gov.uk/brownfieldregister.

FREE CADDY LINER DELIVERY FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS

It's now easier for Wigan Borough residents to recycle their food waste as a new free caddy liner delivery is introduced.

From January 2018 caddy liners will be delivered to all households by Wigan Council's waste crews meaning residents no longer need to purchase their own or collect liners from life centres or libraries. It is hoped this will make it easier for residents to recycle their food waste in the kitchen caddy before putting it in the green bin. Recycling food will also save space in the black bin.

To let the crews know you need a new roll of liners, residents are being asked to tie a caddy liner to the handle of their green bin on their collection day. When the crews come to empty the bins they will leave residents a new set of liners.

Residents are being encouraged to contact the council to order a free kitchen caddy if they do not already have one so they can start to recycle food.

Paul Barton, assistant director for environment, said: "Thank you to residents for recycling more, recycling right as part of The Deal. We have already seen an increase in our recycling rates but we can still do more to reach our targets. "Recycling food and garden waste in the green bin is really important as it is composted and then reused which means it doesn't go to landfill. "Crucially, recycling correctly using all three recycling bins will save space in your black bin. The black bin should be a last resort for items that cannot be recycled."

If you don't currently recycle food and would like to start you can order a kitchen caddy via My Account www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount

Find out more about recycling at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

"LET'S TALK RUBBISH" SAY STAFF WIGAN BOROUGH'S RECYCLING CENTRES

Councillor Kevin Anderson, Cabinet Member for The Environment, said: "Thank you to residents for recycling more, recycling right as part of The Deal. We have already seen an increase in our recycling rates but we still need to do more to reach our targets. "Recycling food and garden waste in the green bin is really important as it saves that waste from going to landfill and it has an important role to play in helping grow our future food. "Crucially, recycling correctly using all three recycling bins will save space in your black bin. The black bin should be a last resort for items that cannot be recycled."

Residents are reminded that our Household Waste Recycling Centres can be exceptionally busy, particularly in peak hours between 10am and 3pm, so are advised to visit outside of these hours to avoid queues. To further reduce queues residents can also help by pre-sorting their recycling at home before they get on site. Visit your local Household Waste and Recycling Centre:

Kirkless, Makerfield Way, Higher Ince, WN2 2PR
Slag Lane, Leigh, WA3 1BZ
Chanters Industrial Estate, Atherton, M46 9FF

Please check the wide range of items that can be recycled before attending site, log on to www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling for more information

Opening hours including Bank Holidays:

Summer - everyday, 8am to 7:45pm (from last Sunday in March)

Winter - everyday, 9am to 5:45pm (from last Sunday in October)

Cars with or without a single axle trailer are accepted. Vans, pick-ups under 3.5 tonnes and twin-axle trailers require a permit. If using a hire vehicles. Please take hire documents and waste permit with you when visiting the centre. All sites have a 2m height restriction and 5mph speed limit.

For more information about recycling visit www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

BOOST FOR ENVIRONMENT AS RECYCLING RATES INCREASE AND FLY TIPPING DECLINES

Incidents of fly tipping in Wigan Borough have bucked the national trend and are declining, new stats reveal. Latest figures from Wigan Council show a 35 per cent reduction in fly tipping reports thanks to a proactive approach and the introduction of a new environmental enforcement and education team. In 2017 there were 1,373 reports of fly tipping compared to 2,105 in 2016.

And it's more good news for the environment as the borough's recycling rate has significantly increased and is on target to exceed the 50 per cent target set by central government as residents are recycling right and recycling more. Since the collection changes in September the rate has increased from 43 per cent to a current estimate of 48 per cent and an extra 1000 tonnes of recycling has been collected compared to the previous year.

With Christmas being the busiest period for the crews and households producing more waste than the other months there's currently increases of up to 17 per cent in the blue bin and increases of up to 30 per cent in the brown bin.

As part of The Deal, the more people recycle and dispose of their waste correctly the more money the council saves helping it to keep council tax low.

Work has taken place to prevent fly tipping at a number of key hotspot areas in the borough including barriers and the installation of CCTV. The environmental enforcement team tackle all types of environmental crime, including fly tipping, littering and dog fouling, and now work seven days a week so are able to deal with issues over the weekend. They are also trialling CCTV cameras which will further help them to gather evidence to catch offenders.

Councillor Kevin Anderson, Cabinet Member For Environment, said: "This is great news to start the New Year and we'd like to say a big thank you to residents for recycling more and for doing their bit to look after the environment. "These are early reports and the figures have not been verified but we're making good progress and are confident with the new collections we can further drive up our recycling rates.

"We remain committed to having a clean and tidy borough and are pleased our work to reduce fly tipping is having a positive impact. We would encourage residents to keep reporting incidents to us so we can continue this work. "In the first instance we will always work with residents to educate them around environmental crime and to ensure they understand how to properly dispose of their waste.

"It costs us money to clean up our communities and remove fly tipping. As part of The Deal, by residents not fly tipping, recycling correctly and disposing of their waste correctly we can keep council tax low and continue to fund essential front line services."

For more information about recycling visit www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

To report an incident of fly tipping visit www.wigan.gov.uk/reportit or download the council's Report It app via your smartphone.

COMMUNITIES IN CHARGE OF ALCOHOL

Residents of Hag Fold are contributing their time as part of a pioneering programme 'Communities in Charge of Alcohol' which launches this week in Wigan. The programme aims get people talking about alcohol and changing their relationship with alcohol.

The champions will work together with others to decide what ways they could involve the wider community in reducing alcohol related harm, including getting involved with licensing decisions if this is important to them in their area.

Being delivered across the ten areas of Greater Manchester, the aim of the programme is to reduce alcohol harm in local communities. The success of the project will be measured over five years and will look at hospital admissions, ambulance call outs and levels of alcohol related crime. The latest statistics from Public Health England show that residents from across all ten areas are consuming more alcohol than the national average, which is putting our emergency services under great strain.

The new programme of work will be led by community volunteers called 'Alcohol Health Champions' who are being trained to talk to family, friends and colleagues about alcohol and health and to let them know what services and information are available, if people want support with cutting down. Wigan Council hopes to recruit a network of around 30 Community Alcohol Champions who live or work in the area to collaborate with the Wigan & Leigh Recovery Partnership who will be the local co-ordinators for the Alcohol Health Champion network in Hag Fold.

RESIDENTS ARE MORE DIGITAL THAN EVER BEFORE

Almost one third of Wigan Borough residents are signed up to MyAccount.

Wigan Council launched MyAccount in 2015 as a way for residents to access council services conveniently online and more than 100,000 people have now signed up, with almost 50 per cent of them making a transaction in the last six months.

The award-winning local authority has worked hard to reduce digital exclusion to make sure anyone who can has basic digital skills by 2020, which not only provides opportunities for residents but also saves the council significant amounts of money.

Features like MyAccount and ReportIT app and exclusive programmes like the Duke of York's iDEA award has even led to Wigan Borough's digital exclusion rate being downgraded from 'medium' to 'low' on the UK Consumer Digital Index 2017, produced by Lloyds Bank

Lesley O'Halloran, assistant director for customer services at Wigan Council said: "Residents have been fantastic at taking up digital opportunities, which is clear to see with more than 700 people signing up to the iDEA course since we rolled it out at the end of 2017. "Digital services are cost effective and help us keep council tax low. In times of austerity, our council tax remains one of the lowest in GM thanks to residents doing their part of The Deal.

"In the next 20 years, more than 90 per cent of jobs will have a digital element and we want to ensure people are ready for this change. In addition, we want to bring convenience to residents as coming to life centres or calling isn't always their preferred way of interacting. "Our digital offer improves accessibility and makes services available 24/7 instead of just nine through five.

Residents have also been taking advantage of the council's ReportIT app, which allows people to report a number of community concerns such as anti-social behaviour, environmental issues, highways problems and more recently, social housing issues, seeing more than 24,000 reports to date.

Wigan Council was also the first local authority in the UK to provide online wedding ceremony bookings and has now furthered this offer by giving residents the ability to digitally arrange payments for birth and death certificates, notice of marriage appointments and payments for weddings.

Lesley continued: "We will strive to build on these amazing successes, which isn't just good news for the public purse, but will save residents' time and trips to their local life centre. "We encourage people to remain enthusiastic and keen to learn about our digital future."

For more information about council services, visit the council's website, which has also been placed in the top nine per cent of all local authorities nationally: www.wigan.gov.uk

MANAGE YOUR MONEY, DON'T STRUGGLE WITH DEBT

'Don't struggle with debt' is the message of a new campaign launching in Wigan Borough. Wigan Council has teamed up with Unify and the Citizen's Advice Bureau to help residents manage their money at one of the most expensive times of the year.

In the last twelve months, (October 2016 – November 2017) 1,718 people visited Wigan Council's crisis desk due to having no food, no money or no gas or electric so the local campaign will encourage residents to get support if they are worried about falling into debt or are already struggling.

There is lots of local support and advice out there for people but sometimes it can be difficult find help before it is too late. Credit Unions can provide loans for individuals without a good credit history and interest rates start at just 12.7 per cent, compared to payday lenders which charge APR of up to 1,509 per cent. The council is warning residents against using a payday lenders or loan sharks and is instead urging people to apply for a cheaper loan through a Credit Union or seek advice for how to manage their finances.

Lesley O'Halloran, Assistant Director for Customer Services at Wigan Council said: "If you find that you are struggling with debt and are unable to manage repayments, it is important to think about which debts you need to deal with first. There can be serious consequences to not paying your bills and we don't want people falling into debt. "At this time of year it can be easy to spend money on things that aren't needed and there is support out there for residents who need help managing their money. There are cheaper and safer alternatives to payday lenders and loan sharks. Although they may seem like the easy option, people don't realise how much interest they charge and it can be so damaging."

Angela Fishwick, Chief Executive of Unify Credit Union, said: "Residents should take extra care when borrowing money to pay for the cost of Christmas. Always ask how much the repayments will be, and what is the total cost of credit and only borrow from licensed lenders. Don't be tempted to borrow from doorstep lenders charging on average 400 per cent APR or from payday lenders charging in excess of 1000 per cent APR. If you are struggling to repay your high cost loan, talk to Unify, we are here to help."

For help and advice on how to manage your money, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/moneyadvice
Alternatively, email welfarerightsadvice@wigan.gov.uk for information about the council's welfare outreach sessions.

ADVICE AT HAND EASIER THAN EVER

Starting Point Plus will now have longer opening hours and a new online service when Wigan Council begins offering the highly regarded support which has previously been provided by Age UK Wigan Borough.

To find out more go to www.wigan.gov.uk/startingpointplus.

The new phone lines will be available Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5 pm and 8.45 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. To contact the service call 01942 489011

THINK YOU CAN FOSTER?

To find out more about fostering and how to become a foster carer in Wigan Borough go to www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering and for more details on 'You Can Foster' go to www.youcanfoster.org

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE WIGAN

What is Incredible Edible?

What Can I Grow?

How to get involved

Is there Funding Available?

Keep up to Date with Events & Workshops

Go to <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/Deal-Communities/Incredible-Edible/index.aspx>

For lots more information

WIGAN COUNCIL'S GOOD TRADER SCHEME

Wigan Council's "Good Trader Scheme" is a directory of over 200 local, reputable businesses. All the listings have star ratings of up to five gold stars that previous customers have awarded them.

Ratings are given based on workmanship and customer service; the more satisfied the customer the higher the rating.

The scheme has been set up to ensure that the residents of the Wigan Borough are getting a fair deal when it comes to work round the home.

Trading Standards check out the traders' trading history before allowing them to be part of the scheme. Whether it's painting and decorating, joinery, or just tidying up your garden make sure you visit www.wigan.gov.uk/goodtrader. Or ring the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

If you are aged over 50 or have a disability Wigan Council Starting Point Plus can access the Scheme on your behalf, contact Starting Point on 01942 489011

HEART HEALTH HELPS WITH FIGHT AGAINST DEMENTIA

To find out more about dementia support visit www.wigan.gov.uk/dementia

TOGETHER FOR ADOPTION

To find out more about Together for adoption visit www.togetherforadoption.co.uk

COULD YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR HELP WITH YOUR FUEL BILL?

Thousands of residents could be entitled to help reducing their fuel bill thanks to our AWARM Plus scheme.

With temperatures continuing to drop living in a cold home can have a detrimental effect on a person's physical and mental wellbeing. Wigan Council works closely with Wigan Care and Repair to visit homes across the borough and complete a Healthy Home Check, which assesses what help and support is available.

The AWARM Plus service is open to anyone who is currently living on a low income, has high energy costs and living with a long term health condition. The service offers a number of energy saving measures to help keep people warm and safe, including draught proofing, loft and wall insulation, benefit checks, energy switching and much more.

If you're struggling to keep warm at home or for more information on AWARM Plus and other schemes available visit www.wigan.gov.uk/warmhome or call [01942 239360](tel:01942239360)

ON YOUR MARKS...GET SET...IT'S LEIGH'S SECOND 10K

It's back and this time it's going to be even bigger!

MP Jo Platt officially launched the countdown to the 2018 Leigh Community 10k on Friday by urging Leigh residents to take up the challenge and help make it an annual event. Last year's inaugural race saw 600 people of all ages and abilities taking part with more than £10,000 raised for chosen charity, Wigan and Leigh Hospice.

This year, organisers are aiming for 1,000 runners. Inspiring healthy lifestyles, FCR Events Ltd, Leigh Harriers, Nectar Creative, Rotary Club of Leigh, Time2Run Events, Wigan and Leigh Hospice and Wigan Council are all working together once again to put on the event with the support of Leigh MP, Jo Platt.

Jo said: "Last year was tremendous, there was a real buzz in the town centre. It would be great to get even more people taking part and cementing Leigh Community 10k as an annual event. "Wigan and Leigh Hospice is a charity close to many of our hearts and a worthy cause to raise money for whether you're running for fun or to beat your personal best."

The Leigh Community 10k, which takes place on Sunday 12 August in Leigh town centre, bolsters an already impressive calendar of running events in Leigh including the popular Flash in the Park 10k, Festive Flash Five and parkrun at Pennington Flash. All runners, joggers and walkers of any ability can join in the second Leigh Community 10k as long as you are over 15 years of age on the day of the event.

Standard entry fee is £17 or £15 if you run for a UK Athletics/ARC Running Club.

You can register for a place in the race at www.leigh10k.co.uk

You can also make a direct donation to the Wigan & Leigh when you register or raise money for a charity of your choice. Wigan and Leigh Hospice has been providing palliative care for adult patients across the borough for more than 30 years. It currently cares for more than 1,000 people with life-limiting illnesses, as well as those people important to patients, every year.

Hospice Chief Executive, Dr Alan Baron said: "We're delighted this event is back for a second year and once again supporting the hospice. "We are fortunate to enjoy fantastic support from local people in Leigh who donate, volunteer their time and participate in fundraising events to help us raise the £8,700 a day we need in order to deliver all of our services. The funds raised through the Leigh Community 10k will help us to continue to provide care for local people who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and support for their loved ones."

Inspiring healthy lifestyles are also planning Couch to 10k training sessions to help people get in tip-top shape for the day.

And if you can't wait until then Run Wigan Festival is **Sunday 18 March**.

More info at www.runwiganfestivals.co.uk

FROM HOWE BRIDGE TO "WOW" BRIDGE

Howe Bridge swimming pool has been given a modern makeover creating a lighter, brighter, look and feel. Wigan Council and Inspiring healthy lifestyles have invested a cool £200,000 to bring the popular public swimming pool bang up to date. There's new energy efficient lighting, smart modern paintwork, new flooring, showers and improvements to the changing rooms.

In 2015, Howe Bridge Leisure Centre enjoyed a major refurbishment. Nearly £3m was invested in a new gym, fitness studio, skate park, climbing centre and much more. The only area of the centre that was not touched at the time was the swimming pool.

Inspiring healthy lifestyles Managing Director Peter Burt, said: "Everyone was delighted with the initial transformation of Howe Bridge Leisure Centre, the only issue was that the improvements on the gym side left the pool area looking a little tired and in need of some work. "Our customers have told us that they wanted to see this area brought up to the same standard and we, along with our partners at the council, are delighted to say that we have now been able to make that happen."

Key improvements include brighter, energy efficient lighting which has the potential to save thousands of pounds each year. The pool area has been made more accessible for everyone, including dedicated children's showers specially designed for smaller hands. Wigan Council has invested £160,000 in Howe

Bridge, whilst Inspiring healthy lifestyles has contributed the remaining £40,000 to transform the changing areas. The improvements are part of a larger £6m investment in health, wellbeing and fitness in the borough under Wigan Council's Deal for Health and Wellness.

Howe Bridge Leisure Centre Manager Andrew Hewitt added: "Our customers have already told us how much they like the new look. The number of visitors to the leisure centre has increased, so it's clear that it is working. We have plenty of new initiatives planned for the pool and we are further developing our swimming programme. Exciting new plans are now being finalised and it's fair to say we're hoping to make a big splash at Howe Bridge this year."

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME

"It's like having an extended member of the family" is the way a woman from Wigan has described being a champion for a local support service. Jeanette Lancaster signed up to be a volunteer for Wigan Council's Shared Lives service because she had some time on her hands and wanted to give something back. She was delighted when she became the champion for Philip Rostron, from Atherton, who was living alone and had lost a lot of his independence after a fall had left him in a wheelchair.

Shared Lives provides companionship to adults who need support due to disability, age or illness. When an adult is referred to the service they get matched with a volunteer who shares similar interests and will be their champion.

Each week when Jeanette visits Philip they go out into the town centre, to visit his brother or to a local café or pub. His time spent with Jeanette is the only time Philip leaves the house. Jeanette said: "Me and Philip clicked immediately, had the same sense of humour and could share life experiences. "I was nervous coming into it. I had some time on my hands with my job. It sounds cheesy but people have been good to me over the years and I wanted to give something back. You've got a lot of support with Shared Lives.

"I always say now I've made some extra friends and it's honestly the best thing I've done. "When I first met up with Philip we were both weary but when he said to me the television was becoming his best friend I could really see where I was making a difference. It pulled at my heart strings and I wanted to give it a try."

Since working with Shared Lives Jeanette has even helped Philip reunite with his long-lost brother. He has also reconnected with the chapel he was part of and has been able to regain some independence.

Philip said he is feeling much happier now and Jeanette has seen an improvement in his overall health and wellbeing. Jeanette said: "You can also help in other areas and make sure someone's needs are being met. Philip's wheelchair is too wide to fit through the doors in this flat so I'm helping him sort that out so he can have better access to his community.

Anyone aged over 18 can become a champion for Shared Lives and will be matched with someone who will suit their personality. It is up to the champion how many hours they volunteer or what support they can provide and, in return for volunteering their time, the champion receives a modest expense payment.

Stuart Cowley, director for adult social care and health at Wigan Council, said: "What we're trying to do is build friendships. There are many residents across the borough who may be isolated and lonely and simply need a friend. We need more champions – local people with big hearts who want to volunteer and make a difference."

To find out more about becoming a Shared Lives champion email sharedlives@wigan.gov.uk or call 01942 487044